



I have anger and sadness in my heart: I miss my family. Who knows where they are now.

I used to live in the African jungle with my tribe. This ugly green mask on my with these big eyes and mouth was used to scare war enemies away. But it is no longer of any use.

My name is Chokwe. When the white men came, they captured me and brought me here, and hung me on a wall. They thought I was a portrait. I was left there, watching other white people paint me, waiting for long hours, wondering when this cruelty would end. But to my astonishment, I found that when they had finished me, they took me and put me up in an exhibition in Rome.

When people pass me, they stare at me. Some just make funny faces. Others start laughing and walk away.

Just like these ones here now: see how they smirk?

Anger just burns in me, making me want to just kill them. Other people, usually smaller children, just get scared and run away. I laugh my head off at them and the echoes of my voice make the walls of the gallery vibrate.

But still, I am sitting here after 7 years, waiting for a life. I just hope my family is OK. I also feel scared at night times when I am

lonely, all by myself in the dark, with nothing to do, wondering and wondering when these people are going to free me.

“Hey, who are you? What are you staring at and what are you writing about me? Don’t you dare write anything bad!”

“Don’t worry. My name is Tarun and I just study in this school. I am just doing my English work - I had to find an interesting character and write about them!”

“So you’re doing your work? And you found me interesting? Cool! And you said that this was a school? Not even a prestigious gallery or a museum- but a school? Oh no! What am I going to do now? Things are even worse than I thought!”

“Oh well can’t help you - here goes the lunch bell. I’ve got to go. Bye!”

“.....?”

Tarun George Jacob

